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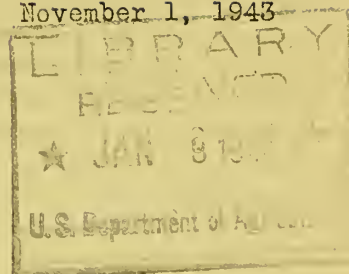
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WAR FOOD ADMINISTRATION
Food Distribution Administration
Washington 25, D. C.

November 1, 1943

MEMORANDUM



To: All Federal Processed Foods Inspectors

From: Paul M. Williams, In Charge, Processed Products Standardization and Inspection Division, Fruit and Vegetable Branch

Subject: Standardization Work and Revisions of United States Grades

This Division consists of three sections - Standardization, Inspection, and Container. By far the largest number of employees in this Division are classified as inspectors. Nevertheless, every inspector is expected to be a standardization "outpost." It is the policy of this Division to amend its standards if and when desirable and this will be accomplished by predicated our action upon results of inspections and observations and suggestions made by our inspection force. Inspectors should, therefore, never hesitate to advise the official in charge of the office to which they are assigned, in the event they have suggestions which they believe would bring about a betterment of our grades.

A number of inspectors have made excellent suggestions as to how our grades might be improved. Many of the suggestions have been adopted and some have not. Just because some of your suggestions are not adopted do not feel that they are not desired because this is not the case.

However, it may be well to outline some of the essential considerations in developing standards and amending them. It is always our sincere desire to have our standards reflect the best commercial practices. We have never felt that it was possible for all packers to always pack the highest grades. What we really do when we set up standards is to separate or divide each commodity into the proper quality classifications, providing just as many grades as are necessary to properly accommodate the entire production of each item. In some commodities we have two grades above substandard and in others, three. We are sometimes criticized for not having more grades above substandard and sometimes we are criticized for having too many. We try to provide the minimum number of grades necessary to make possible proper merchandising of the entire crop.

Since our standards are national in scope, they must of necessity cover each item nationally, regardless of where produced. We cannot have separate standards for different sections of the country. Think how confusing this would be in labeling for consumers if we did. Moreover, our grades continue in effect from season to season, until they are amended. Many packers believe we should amend the grades each season, particularly when they have poor crop conditions in their sections. This cannot be done because a standard must be a standard year in and year out; that is, until amended. If we amended standards from year to year we would soon have a jumble of confusion in labeling because goods carried over from one season to another might be labeled Grade A in the 1938 season and carried over into the 1939 season Grade A would be of poorer quality. So, if we had a Grade A for 1938 and a different Grade A for 1939, confusion would result.

Some canners argue that we should have a standard for each size can, as for example in the case of cream style corn. Some believe we should set up a separate standard for No. 10 cans of corn because of the darkening which takes place in processing. If we did this we would have hopeless confusion because if we permitted the use of Grade A on No. 10 cans of dark corn what justification would there be for not putting it on a No. 2 can? So, regardless of the size of the container, the standard must remain the same from year to year, until amended.

There are still other packers who argue that standards should change with market conditions. What hopeless confusion would result if we attempted such a program!

Inspectors may at any time be called upon to do investigational work in connection with some phase of standardization. If you are selected for this sort of assignment please bear in mind that information used on which to predicate a standard or amendment thereto must be secured from as many interested parties as possible and practicable; that is, canners, wholesale grocers, brokers, consumers, and growers, because we must take into consideration the interests of all groups. We must never "play favorites" in our standardization work.

It is quite natural for us to study the problem with processors primarily. After giving careful consideration to the growing of the crop under consideration it is always well to accumulate as much accurate factual data as is available. Investigators in this field are frequently able to secure, on a confidential basis, carefully kept records of reliable concerns, which are invaluable in reaching a solution of the problem at hand. On the other hand, investigators will encounter members of the trade who are biased and have a personal interest in having a standard set in a certain way they think will operate to their own company's advantage. A good investigator will sense this quickly.

Inspectors will also find that regional jealousies grow up in industries and several regions may claim they produce and pack the best product in the United States. This is only natural but many of the statements made in defense of products of their section are hardly warranted by the facts.

Inspectors must never divulge information secured from anyone. You are cautioned particularly on this point because if you carry information from one processor to another you will find the source of information will dry up quickly and your usefulness as an investigator will be at an end.

Occasionally a disgruntled processor will complain to this office about a rejection, and in stressing his claim that the standards should be changed will make a statement such as - "Your inspector, Mr. _____, at _____, said that he thought the grade ought to be changed, too." Inspectors are cautioned to refrain from making such or similar statements to members of the trade. If you think a standard should be changed, bring the matter to the attention of your immediate superior. Never say so to the trade.

Reports should be forwarded in concise, clearly understood terms, in triplicate, through your immediate superior to the District Supervisor, who will add his comments and relay the reports to the Washington office, where they will be given very careful study. The practices of each section will be taken into consideration and finally a conclusion will be reached as to what will constitute the most practicable standard from the standpoint of the industry as a whole, rather than as of one particular district.

A very great responsibility thus devolves upon you, because the Washington decision which is predicated on your findings and those of other inspectors, frequently has far reaching effects on the industry. I cannot, therefore, possibly impress upon you too strongly the necessity for collecting definite data and correct information from individuals who know their product and business well.

Paul M. Williams

